



**For Immediate Release**

Easton, MD – January 27, 2022

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**Talbot County Council Meeting Highlights, Tuesday, January 25, 2022**

*These highlights only reflect the business items covered from the Council's approved agenda. To view the complete County Council meeting, please visit: Talbot County Meeting Videos - Talbot County, Maryland ([www.talbotcountymd.gov](http://www.talbotcountymd.gov)).*

The Talbot County Council held their regularly scheduled meeting virtually on January 25 with all Council members present.

**I. Proclamation – National Human Trafficking Prevention Month – January 2022.**

Council presented a proclamation to Edwin Thomas, Co-Chairman, Eastern Shore Human Trafficking Task Force recognizing January 2022 as “National Human Trafficking Prevention Month” in Talbot County and urged all citizens to actively work toward the prevention of human trafficking, prosecution of its perpetrators, and support of the survivors of this horrendous crime. Council member Pack made a motion to support the proclamation and Council member Price seconded the motion. Council member Pack commented, “It is appalling, that this is a problem not only across the United States but right here in our community. And we do need the organizations who look out for these child victims. It's a tragedy when anything like this is perpetrated against the child because the repercussions throughout the child's life are so deep and we need to acknowledge the work of those who are working to ameliorate these inhumane acts and to take care of those victims and to prevent these crimes.”

The Council voted unanimously to approve the proclamation.

Edwin Thomas of the Eastern Shore Human Trafficking Task Force commented, “Everyone thinks that human trafficking is national or international and not here at home. The Eastern Shore Human Trafficking Task Force actually got its start right in Easton after there was a human trafficking arrest here back in 2013. A number of residents became very concerned about this issue and created this task force with public awareness as its focus. We feel that the more the public is aware, the more traffickers will be caught, and the more children will be prevented from becoming victims of trafficking. So, one of the things you might think about is that every child has a cell phone, and cell phones are the way that pimps and predators reach out and begin trolling young people. So, the more parents can pay attention to how their children use their cell

phones, the more likely their children are unlikely to become victims of human trafficking. We are so very pleased with what you're able to do tonight and taking the proclamation seriously.”

## **II. Presentation of FY 2020-2021 Audit – Chris Lehman, Partner, SB & Company, LLC; Joye Nagle, Talbot County Finance Director and Ken Davis, Assistant Director of Finance**

Joye Nagle introduced the results of the FY 2020-2021 Audit by SB & Company, LLC. Nagle stated, “This is the first year that Ken Davis and I worked through the audit of the county's financials. While we both have deep knowledge in accounting and finance, neither one of us have real experience working in local governments. Ken and I learned quite a bit and made a few discoveries and now we feel well prepared to implement some positive change. SB & Company was very willing to answer all our questions and we had plenty of them and were also willing to tolerate some delays as we came up to speed. We so much appreciated being able to work through the audit with Chris and his colleagues.”

Ken Davis, added, “The audit cycle started late by necessity just because of our transition. We appreciate your team and the flexibility in completing this in a condensed timeframe in order for us to meet our statutory deadline of December 31 and the extra effort put in over the holiday season.”

Chris Lehman presented the results of the June 30, 2021 financial statements including the Performance of the Uniform Guidance Single Audit for the County, the Audit of 9-1-1 Trust Fund, the Landfills Financial Assurance Agreed-Upon Procedures, the Review of Uniform Financial Report, and Preparation of the Data Collection Form. He stated, “At the conclusion of the single audit at a high level, we've issued a clean unmodified opinion on the financial statements that says that the financial statements are reasonably free of material misstatement. We did not discover any instances of fraud or any material weaknesses in internal controls. We received full cooperation from management and have no audit journals entries noted. It's a clean audit, unmodified opinion, with no material weaknesses that we've identified.”

Council member Price added, “It's nice to see that we have continued great marks. Our previous finance director was amazing, and our new finance director is amazing along with all of the Finance Office staff. So, I think it just goes to show that we have the right people in place, and we take care of and manage our money very well and have all the processes to ensure good use of our taxpayer dollars.”

## **III. Update from Talbot County Department of Social Services on Children's Advocacy Center and Empower Me Program – Linda Webb, Executive Director, Talbot County Department of Social Services; Paris Quillet, Special Projects Coordinator, Talbot County Department of Social Services**

Linda Webb reported that the County recently helped with the cost of the re-accreditation site visit for the Children's Advocacy Center (CAC). She states, “The Center was re-accredited for four years, meeting every standard and there was no corrective action required. We are in the midst of the National Children's Alliance re-accreditation process now, with a site visit scheduled for May 10, 2022.”

### **CAC Function**

A CAC provides services and support to child victims of sex abuse, severe physical abuse and extreme neglect, as well as medical services to child victims of sex abuse from Kent, Caroline, Talbot, Dorchester and Queen Anne's counties. They also serve the non-offending caregivers. These services are provided through a multidisciplinary team of professionals that includes child protective services workers, a family advocate, legal law enforcement, and medical and mental health partners. The CAC provides specialized forensic interviews, as well as medical examinations and services. It's also a best practice model of care for children who have been sexually abused. Prior to the implementation of Children's Advocacy Centers, children who had experienced sexual abuse had to recount their experience multiple times for law enforcement and social workers which caused them to relive their trauma from the sex abuse incidents. The implementation of Children's Advocacy Centers created a multidisciplinary team of professionals that would observe a specially trained forensic interviewer interview the child remotely once making sure that all of the questions that were needed to support an investigation were asked. These interviews are recorded so that they can be used as evidence.

### **CAC Partnerships**

The CAC has a number of partners including the University of Maryland Shore Regional Health, which provides a physical location for the Center, specially trained sex abuse nurse examiners, as well as medical equipment and laboratory services. The Talbot County Department of Social Services provides a family advocate who supports the child and the family in the Child Protective Services (CPS) investigation, as well as a supervisor and program manager, and all of the administrative functions of the CAC. The CAC employs a coordinator who coordinates all of the activities of the CAC.

### **CAC Support**

Last year, the CAC had to move out of the hospital location and into a separate location, provided by the University of Maryland. Support for the Center comes from the Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention, Youth and Victim Services, the Talbot County Council, and Talbot Community Connections, a nonprofit that raises funds for the Department of Social Services that are not funded by other government entities. Easton Utilities provides the CAC with Internet service.

### **CAC Statistics**

The number of children and adults served by the CAC has grown steadily through 2020, requiring the CAC to increase its family advocate from part-time to full-time status. This year, from July through the end of December 2021, the CAC has already provided 253 sessions with the family advocate. This includes serving 94 children and adults and conducting 38 forensic interviews.

### **What's New**

The CAC has hired a new medical director who is a local nurse practitioner. The Center held its first in-person open house on October 18, 2021 to show off its new space provided by the University of Maryland Shore Regional Health. The Center has offered 53 training opportunities this fiscal year to date to members of its multidisciplinary team to keep them up to date on

changes in areas like investigation, interview, medical trauma, mental health and forensic sciences and techniques.

### **Empower Me Program**

Paris Quillet shared that the Empower Me program is a child sex abuse prevention program that teaches children and adults about personal safety. The goal of the program is to reduce the incidence of child sexual sex abuse by providing education and caregivers with the language and the tools to help themselves and to keep others safe. The Empower Me program focuses on teaching children about gut instinct. She stated, “We call it the “uh oh” feeling and helping them focus on how to develop an adult safety net and implementing safety rules. We use our hands as an interactive way to teach children about their safety net. Their hand is their net, and each one of our fingers represents an adult (a trusted person) that we can go to. We're doing presentations with children (pre-school through 6th grade) in classrooms and with adults (caretakers, interact or work with children).”

To date, Empower Me presentations have been done at schools, churches, open community sessions, recreational organizations, non-profits, childcare programs, detention centers, individual community requests, and TCDSS clients. The program has reached 1,200 children and 600 adults since 2015. This includes all first-grade classes in Talbot County Public Schools in 2019 and 2021, Sts. Peter and Paul Elementary School and parents in the 2019-2020 school year, with virtual sessions during the pandemic.

Council member Divilio added, “This is one of those things that you wish you never even knew about. And, you know, unfortunately, it exists. And I remember the first time meeting a nurse who handled these kinds of cases and thinking how difficult and challenging her life must be. I just can't thank the people who step into these roles enough and I am grateful they are providing such an amazing service.”

**IV. Resolution No. 308, A RESOLUTION TO RESCIND ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION NO. 281, A RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE TALBOT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE WATER AND SEWER PLAN (THE “PLAN”) TO RECLASSIFY AND REMAP PORTIONS OF CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY LOCATED IN THE TOWN OF TRAPPE, MARYLAND, ASSOCIATED WITH THE LAKESIDE PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (THE “LAKESIDE PROJECT”) (FORMERLY KNOWN AS “TRAPPE EAST”), FURTHER DESCRIBED AS TAX MAP 54, PARCEL 304; TAX MAP 55, PARCELS 14, 15, 17, 19, 44, 65, 83, AND 85; AND, TAX MAP 59, PARCEL 4, THE TOTAL AREA CONSISTING OF EIGHT HUNDRED SIXTY-FIVE ACRES, MORE OR LESS (THE “PROPERTY”), FROM “S-2” AND “W-2” (AREAS WHERE IMPROVEMENTS OR EXTENSIONS TO EXISTING, OR CONSTRUCTION OF NEW COMMUNITY, MULTI-USE, OR SHARED SANITARY FACILITIES ARE PROGRAMMED FOR PROGRESS WITHIN THREE TO FIVE YEARS) TO “S-1” AND “W-1” (AREAS SERVED OR TO BE SERVED BY COMMUNITY, MULTI-USE, OR SHARED SANITARY FACILITIES WHICH ARE EXISTING, UNDER CONSTRUCTION, OR HAVE IMMEDIATE PRIORITY STATUS); TO AMEND THE PLAN TO ADD CERTAIN WATER AND SEWER CAPITAL PROJECTS RELATED TO THE LAKESIDE PROJECT AND EXISTING SYSTEMS FOR THE FISCAL YEARS 2020 THROUGH 2030; AND, TO AMEND THE PLAN TO UPDATE THE NARRATIVE**

DESCRIPTION IN THE PLAN RELATIVE TO THE LAKESIDE PROJECT AND EXISTING SYSTEMS, as amended, WITHOUT PREJUDICE.

Council member Laura Price said that she and two other Council members had introduced a resolution in December (Resolution No. 313) to amend the County's Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan and pointed out that it makes sense for the Planning Commission to review both resolutions at the same meeting. She added, "So while we may not officially need it, it does make sense, at least in my mind. If we are going to be sending Resolution 313 to them . . . go ahead and let them officially make a statement on Resolution 308, which makes more sense than what they did on Resolution 281." After a lengthy discussion, Council member Leshner made a motion to defer the vote on Resolution No. 308 and it was seconded by Council member Price. The motion passed by a Council vote of 3-2 as follows:

Mr. Callahan – aye  
Mr. Divilio – nay  
Mr. Leshner – aye  
Ms. Price – aye  
Mr. Pack – nay

Council President Callahan requested that the staff schedule a work session in the next week with Council and all of the parties working on the Lakeside issue to discuss the issues on the table. The Council will provide a list of people to be invited to the work session to County staff. Council President Callahan commented, "It's in this particular situation, I'd just like to see all of the players at the table to clear up some of the questions we all have. It just makes sense to me at this stage with everything that's been said. Communication amongst us means everything. It's about hearing the people and moving forward."

**V. Resolution No. 311, A RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE TALBOT COUNTY COUNCIL RULES OF PROCEDURE TO CLARIFY CERTAIN PROCEDURES REGARDING THE ADOPTION OF NUMBERED AND ADMINISTRATIVE RESOLUTIONS, THE FILING OF PETITIONS, THE DRAFTING OF LEGISLATION, AND THE CONDUCT OF PUBLIC HEARINGS AND TO CORRECT OUTDATED AND INCONSISTENT LANGUAGE**

The Council discussed proposed amendments to Resolution No. 311 concerning the Council Rules of Procedure. The Council asked County Attorney Patrick Thomas to add a sentence to Section VI. A *Introduction of Bills or Resolutions* regarding copying Council members when the County Attorney is asked to draft legislation to reflect, "Two other members of the Council shall be copied on the request." Council member Pack made the motion to accept the amendment and it was seconded by Council member Price. The Council voted unanimously to approve the amendment.

The Council asked County Attorney Patrick Thomas to amend language in Section VI.B *Introduction of Petitions* adding the words, "except upon demonstration of a material change in facts or circumstances as determined by the Council in its sole discretion." Council member Price made a motion to accept the amendment and Council Vice President Leshner seconded the motion. The Council voted unanimously to approve the amendment.

Council member Price motioned to approve Resolution No. 311, as amended. Council member Pack seconded the motion. The Council voted unanimously to approve Resolution No. 311, as amended. The legislation will take effect immediately.

VI. Public Hearing:

**Resolution No. 313, A RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE TALBOT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE WATER AND SEWER PLAN REGARDING THE CONNECTION OF PHASE 1, SECTION 1 OF THE LAKESIDE PROJECT TO THE EXISTING TRAPPE WASTEWATER SYSTEM**

Council member Leshner proposed an amendment to Resolution No. 313 which adds a requirement that “any new connections to the existing Town of Trappe wastewater system are subject to the existing WWTP not having any outstanding MDE enforcement actions, consent orders, or violations **and being upgraded to ENR standards with the treated effluent also meeting ENR standards, as set forth in the “Trappe Area Sewerage System” section of this Plan.**” (new proposed amendment language added in red). Ms. Price seconded Mr. Leshner’s proposed amendment. Council discussion ensued. Council member Pack asked for a motion to vote on Resolution 313. There was no second to the motion. The motion failed. Ms. Price rescinded her second of Mr. Leshner’s proposed amendment.

Mr. Leshner’s amendment has been introduced and will be considered at a later meeting.

Talbot County Planner Officer Miguel Salinas prepared a memorandum to the Council reporting that the Planning Commission found Resolution No. 313 to be inconsistent with the County’s Comprehensive Plan by a vote of 3-2. He shared that concerns were expressed by Planning Commissioners about the level of nitrogen released into La Trappe Creek, the lack of a nitrogen cap imposed on the existing Trappe Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP), and the overall existing conditions of La Trappe Creek. Planning Commissioners noted that the existing plant is a BIOLAC plant, despite the Comprehensive Plan’s classification of the plant as a BNR plant, and the discharge permit does not include a nitrogen cap. Commissioners expressed concern that connecting additional homes to the Trappe WWTP will continue to harm surface waters, watermen and recreationists. Mr. Salinas asked for clarifications on Work Session and the Planning Commission’s role in the upcoming work session.

Ray Clarke reported the Public Works Advisory Board removed Resolution No. 313 from their meeting agenda because of Planning Commission’s ruling about its inconsistencies with the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Clarke noted the Public Works Advisory Board wants to consider new information from the public hearings and discharge permits. He reminded the Council that if Resolution No. 313 is amended it would need to go back to public hearing in March. The Council held a public hearing on Resolution No. 313 and then closed the public hearing on Resolution 313.

**VII. Discussion of Pending General Assembly Legislation – Delegate Johnny Mautz presented HB 51 – Talbot County Deer and turkey hunting on Sundays –**

Delegate Mautz explained that the bill allows for Sunday hunting with a weapon approved for that season on private land only. The bill would align Talbot County with its neighboring counties on this hunting. Council member Price made a motion to support HB51 and Council

member Divilio seconded. The Council voted 4-1 to approve HB 51. Council members Pack, Divilio, Price, and Callahan voted to support HB 51 and Council Vice President Leshar voted against the motion.

#### VIII. County Manager's Report:

- **Board and Committee Appointments.** Mr. Stamp requested the reappointment of Wendy Young Dyott, Laura Higgins, and Glen Klakring and Kerri Engels Roberts to the Adult Public Guardianship Review Board. The Council voted unanimously to approve the reappointments as presented.
- **Request from Eastern Shore Land Conservancy for a Letter in Support of the 2022 Mid-Shore Rural Legacy Applications.** Miguel Salinas and Mr. David Satterfield of Eastern Shore Land Conservancy requested a letter of support of the two rural legacy areas: Tuckahoe Rural Legacy Area and Eastern Shore Heartland Rural Legacy Area. The Council voted unanimously to approve a letter of support for the Rural Legacy areas.
- **Request from Department of Parks and Recreation to Award Bid No. 21-08, Community Center Athletic Field Irrigation** – Preston Peper requested permission to award Bid 21-08 for the Community Center Athletic Field Irrigation to go along with changing the turf in the back of the community center to Bermuda grass to be more play ready and safer for athletes. A sole bid from Montgomery Irrigation was submitted in the amount of \$85,000. If approved, the project is eligible for Program Open Space reimbursement of 90% (\$76,500). Mr. Stamp stated that he has confirmed that there are sufficient funds in the budget to handle the 10% difference. The Council voted unanimously to approve the bid award to Montgomery Irrigation.
- **Request from Department of Parks and Recreation to Award Bid No. 21-11, Community Center Ice Plant Replacement** – Preston Peper requested permission to award Bid 21-11 in the amount of \$1,089,000, plus additional fixed costs of \$25,000, to American Arena, the sole bidder, for the Community Center Ice Plant Replacement. This includes the removal of the old ice as well as draining and disposing of all toxic chemicals for a total project cost of \$1,114,000. Upon completion of the project, reimbursement of \$1 million will be requested from the Maryland Department of Natural Resource Local Parks and Programs Infrastructure funding to be used in FY 22. He requested the Council's approval for \$114,000 in contingency funds to cover the cost not reimbursed by DNR. The Finance Director has certified that contingency funds are available for this purchase. The Council voted unanimously to award the bid to American Arena and to utilize \$114,000 in contingency funds.
- **Mr. Stamp reported that the Council meetings will remain virtual through the end of February.**
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The meeting was adjourned at 10:08 p.m. The next Council meeting will be held virtually on February 8, 6 p.m.